

Iraqi leaders will emerge who can be part of such an Interim Authority. The Interim Authority will progressively assume more of the functions of government. It will provide a means for Iraqis to participate in the economic and political reconstruction of their country from the outset.

Coalition forces will remain in Iraq as long as necessary to help the Iraqi people to build their own political institutions and reconstruct their country, but no longer. We look forward to welcoming a liberated Iraq to the international community of nations. We call upon our partners in the international community to join with us in ensuring a democratic and secure future for the Iraqi people.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom and Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland on Northern Ireland

April 8, 2003

We affirm our individual and collective commitment to the Good Friday Agreement and to its full and complete implementation. The people of Northern Ireland and their leaders have a momentous opportunity to ensure that peace is strengthened and political stability secured.

The opportunity to cement the peace is historic. The case is compelling; the cause just; the outcome must be fair, balanced, and comprehensive. The acceptance and implementation of the Governments' forthcoming proposals would promote the reconciliation that the people of Northern Ireland desire and deserve.

These proposals, built on the firm ground of the Good Friday Agreement, hold out the prospect of enormous progress. They reflect our shared view that there can be no place in Northern Ireland for paramilitary activity and capability. The break with paramilitarism in all its past forms must be complete and irrevocable. The proposals will encompass a wide range of additional issues, including normalization, the devolution of justice and

policing, sustainable political institutions, and human rights. The participation of all parties in effective community policing, a necessary key to long term stability in Northern Ireland, would constitute a significant step forward. There will be a need for a mechanism, one designed to safeguard the interests and rights of all, to verify compliance with the key undertakings. All three Governments are committed to supporting effective monitoring arrangements. Acts of completion, and a reaffirmation that political change is to come through exclusively peaceful and democratic means, will renew and expand trust and confidence.

Peace is its own dividend. At the same time, peace fosters an environment where entrepreneurship and business creativity can thrive, where jobs will be created, and where prosperity will follow. Our governments have agreed to work together to explore ways to encourage the flow of investment to Northern Ireland.

We call upon Northern Ireland's political representatives, community and business leaders, and citizens from all walks of life to respond positively to the forthcoming statements. We see no better way to fulfill the promise of the Good Friday Agreement. They have an unprecedented chance to continue their bold march from a troubled past to a future of promise and hope for generations to come. In seizing this opportunity, Northern Ireland will serve as a model to the world for dialogue and negotiation, demonstrating to all that what was once divided can be drawn together in a spirit of reconciliation and respect.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Proclamation 7660—National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day, 2003

April 8, 2003

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

America's former prisoners of war (POWs) are national heroes whose service to our

country will never be forgotten. These brave men and women who fought for America and endured cruelties and deprivation as prisoners of war helped to protect our Nation, liberated millions of people from the threats of tyranny and terror, and advanced the cause of freedom worldwide.

This year, our Nation commemorates the 50th anniversary of the signing of the armistice to end armed conflict in the Korean War. We remember Operation Little Switch, conducted April through May 1953, that freed 149 American POWs, and Operation Big Switch, conducted August through September 1953, which returned 3,597 Americans to our country. Finally, Operation Glory, conducted July through November 1954, was responsible for the return of the remains of 2,944 Americans from North Korea. During this observance, we also recognize and honor the more than 8,100 Americans still unaccounted for from the Korean War.

This year also marks the 30th anniversary of Operation Homecoming, in which 591 American POWs from Vietnam were returned. We also recognize and honor those Americans still unaccounted for from the Vietnam War.

All of these individuals are to be honored for their strength of character and for the difficulties they and their families endured. From World War II, the Korean War, and Vietnam, to the 1991 Gulf War, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and other conflicts, our service men and women have sacrificed much to secure freedom, defend the ideals of our Nation, and free the oppressed. By answering the call of duty and risking their lives to protect others, these proud patriots continue to inspire us today as we work with our allies to extend peace, liberty, and opportunity to people around the world.

As we honor our former POWs, we are reminded of our current POWs, captured in Operation Iraqi Freedom. We will work to secure their freedom, and we pray for their speedy and safe return. These brave men and women in uniform follow in the footsteps of these former POWs who placed country above self to advance peace in a troubled world.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 9, 2003, as National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day. I call upon all the people of the United States to join me in remembering former American prisoners of war by honoring the memory of their sacrifices and in praying for the safe return of our POWs. I also call upon Federal, State, and local government officials and private organizations to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this eighth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-seventh.

George W. Bush

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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on April 11.

Statement on Senate Passage of Legislation on the Faith-Based Initiative

April 9, 2003

I commend the Senate for acting in a bipartisan way to pass legislation that will help us meet our shared goal of better serving Americans in need. This legislation contains key elements of the Faith-Based Initiative that I proposed more than 2 years ago to encourage more charitable giving and rally the armies of compassion that exist in communities all across America.

America's charities face tough times, and we can do more to support their efforts. I look forward to continuing to work with Congress to improve the CARE Act legislation, and I continue to urge Congress to take additional steps to end discrimination against faith-based organizations that have a proven record of helping people in need realize a better life.